

[9 cont.]

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After having recited the required prayers, one expresses his particular desire in a whisper while shielding the mouth with the right hand.

Then one lies down in a quiet and suitable place, on the right side, placing the right hand under the ear.

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Drugs and substances: Many drugs are provided for facilitating dreaming, sometimes by the mou'abbirs (who are relatively very rare in Senegal) and sometimes by other experienced persons.

The use of the roots of bakis or of sindiègne (a kind of creeping plant common in the western part of Senegal) is very widespread; if one falls asleep with a toothpick of bakis or sindiègne in his mouth, he will have frightful visions in which demons, the dead, and supernatural beings appear.

The same result is obtained if, before lying down, one takes a solution of salted water in which roots of sindiègne have fermented for quite a long time, the effect of which is both purgative and stimulative.

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Among other substances, the extract called kaoulane (sometimes used in the form of a lotion for the face), liquid myrrh, opium, etc. should be mentioned.

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More rarely, fumigation is practiced in a sealed and isolated hut, in which honey or incense is burned. Obviously, in this case, the procedure may be completed by one of the above practices.

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Magical means: Throughout Senegal (as is well-known) one finds an enormous number of talismans (for example, the khâtim, magical designs made up of names, characters, and figures which possess a kind of supernatural power), the aim of which is to evoke favorable dreams; their form varies according to the desire that the believer wants to realize.

Bohumil Holas

(Ifan, Dakar)